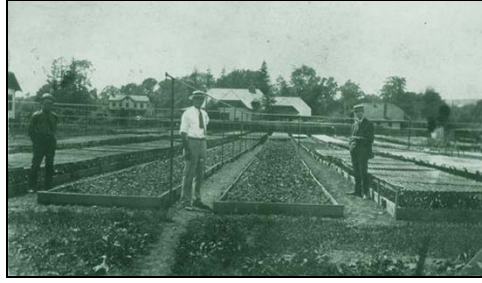


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A. PRINCETON NURSERIES KINGSTON SITE REDUCED USE & DECLINE, THROUGH 1995

The Kingston Site of Princeton Nurseries reached its as-built character in the mid-1980s. The period that followed was marked by the death of John W. Flemer December 20, 1982 and the subsequent sale of nursery lands. Before his death, John Flemer ran the Princeton Nurseries operation collaboratively with his older brother, William Flemer III. While William Flemer III managed the plant production and introductions of new species, John oversaw the administrative and management side of the business. Together John Flemer and William Flemer III took the nursery operation established largely by William Flemer Jr. and transformed it into a thriving, innovative business. John Flemer made important contributions to the field of agricultural labor management, working with the Glassboro Service Association and developing strong relationships with the Puerto Rican workers. Following his death, management began to dwindle and the business culture cultivated by the brothers declined.¹ Use of the Kingston Site was gradually abandoned as operations shifted to Allentown. During this period of reduced use and decline, the function and overall character of the Kingston Site was altered.

The death of John W. Flemer affected the operations at Princeton Nurseries. In addition to changes in management, his death precipitated the sale of additional lands. The estate taxes were such that the Flemer family had to sell approximately 500 acres of the expansive grounds. The lands were sold to Princeton University to be part of its Princeton Forrestal Center.² This included lands west of US Route 1, south of the nursery operation core along Mapleton Road. By 1987, Princeton Forrestal Associates proposed a 1,050-home development that would have dramatically altered the landscape character formerly defined by the fields of nursery stock and scattered support facilities. Strong public opposition combined with a weakening economy to halt the development.³

In 1951, Princeton University had acquired the 825-acre campus of the Rockefeller Medical Institute; the campus became the James Forrestal Campus, which came to house several of the University's (largely government sponsored and funded) research facilities. In the 1970s, Princeton University established the Princeton Forrestal Center, using the Forrestal Campus as its core to which it added several large parcels. Some of the land had been used by Princeton Nurseries. In 1986, Princeton University acquired most of the Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site remaining west of Route 1 through an entity called Princeton Forrestal Associates, with the intent of providing

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addition land for its Princeton Forrestal Center. In 1999, land was transferred to the Trustees of the University.

Since the early 1970s, Picus Associates (or principals who were with its predecessor firm) has been the developer of Princeton Forrestal Center for Princeton University.⁴ It has been responsible for the development of a large part of the University's Forrestal Campus and adjacent areas as a major Corporate Office and Research Complex. It was established as a way to "influence the shape and pattern of development in central New Jersey."⁵ Of the lands obtained for the Center, some was preserved as open space, some developed as part of the research institution, and much of the lands "developed for office, research, light industrial use, and for town houses, apartments, a hotel, and a shopping area."⁶ With the creation of Princeton Forrestal Associates, the character of the former nursery lands and surrounding context began to shift from primarily open, agricultural fields scattered with individual residences to more suburban-type development.

Over the next several years, business progressively slowed. In 1992, William Flemer III retired as president of Princeton Nurseries.⁷ By 1994, Princeton Nurseries could no longer sustain its expansive nursery operations in the Kingston area. In September, the Nurseries relocated the majority of its operations to the lands in Allentown. This included relocating the primary administrative services and "many other activities." Relocation was considered part of a broader consolidation of the Princeton Nurseries operations within a "long term plan to operate more efficiently and competitively while maintaining [its] standard for quality and growth," as well as a "fundamental change in the company's infrastructure." The Allentown location became the center of all management, shipping, sales, customer service, and a considerable amount of production. The Kingston Site remained open as the wholesale distribution branch of Princeton Nurseries. Its wholesale yard was expanded to "provide a greater volume of plant material and hardgoods throughout the year."⁸ Details of this expansion remain unknown.

By the end of this period, changes had been made to the Kingston Site of Princeton Nurseries. Much of the 1,500 acres had been sold to the Princeton University for its Forrestal Center.⁹ The administrative and operational core at the northern edge of the nursery lands remained largely intact, as did the worker dormitory and pool area. As Princeton Nurseries continued to operate the Kingston Site as a wholesale distribution center, much of this area and the greenhouse and poly house collection likely remained in use. The small clusters of former farmhouses and worker residences also remained in place. The most dramatic changes to the Kingston Site occurred to the south. East of St. Joseph's Seminary, Princeton Forrestal Center established its main campus along the western edge of US Route 1. A large clover-leaf interchange was constructed along Route 1 at the northeast corner of the new campus. To the southwest, Princeton Forrestal Center developed former nursery production fields into a large residential subdivision. Even with the development, some evidence of the former nursery use remained. Windrows planted to protect nursery stock remained in place, extending northeast-southwest between the Forrestal Campus, the new housing development, and the Seminary. Additional development had also been undertaken to the east of US Route 1, further altering the context of the nursery lands. (See *Plan 7*.)

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B. PRINCETON NURSERIES KINGSTON SITE
SALE & RENEWED USE, 1995 TO 2011

With the sale of the most of the nursery lands (and an option on the remainder) to Princeton Forrestal Associates in 1995, the future of the former Kingston Site of Princeton Nurseries was uncertain. As development plans for the area emerged, several residents became concerned that the historic Princeton Nurseries lands would be developed beyond recognition. In 1997, the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands formed in response to potential new development. The primary goal of the Friends group was to ensure that the former nursery lands not be lost to the expanding residential, institutional, and commercial growth occurring in the area. The lands were valued at \$100,000 per acre because of their location in the rapidly expanding area of central New Jersey. This valuation posed a challenge to the preservation of the former agricultural fields and nursery operation facilities.¹⁰

As the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands continued to explore ways to preserve the former Kingston Site, Princeton Forrestal Center (PFC) developed other plans for new residences. In December 2000, PFC received approval to build a 220-unit housing complex in Plainsboro Township within the former nursery lands. The new development, known as Barclay Square, was located farther north than PFC's previous projects, north of St. Joseph's Seminary. As part of this development, PFC agreed to maintain 30 acres abutting the Delaware and Raritan Canal as preserved open space.¹¹ Broader development of the area was still slow to proceed and Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands continued to explore preservation of the lands.

Over the course of the next five years, with considerable input and pressure from the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands on all parties, a great deal of negotiation took place between PFC (representing Princeton University), the Townships of South Brunswick and Plainsboro, William Flemer's Sons, Inc. (the owners of Princeton Nurseries), and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program.¹² In 2003, PFC offered to donate 200 of the remaining 500 acres of open land to the Township of South Brunswick. In return, PFC wanted 75 acres of the former nursery lands to be rezoned to allow more room for the construction of a large office complex and conference center.¹³

Negotiations continued and eventually approximately 75 additional acres adjacent to the parcel fronting on US Route 1 was rezoned to accommodate office development. Princeton University donated about 127 acres of land to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Township of South Brunswick. Additionally, through its Green Acres Program, the DEP purchased approximately 60 acres of land at a cost of \$2,794,565 from William Flemer's Sons, Inc. Most of this area was now named the Mapleton Preserve, jointly owned by the DEP and South Brunswick Township. The Mapleton Preserve includes the nursery core, former packing and shipping buildings, propagation house, and some production fields. The DEP retained full ownership of about 7 acres of land at the former nursery entrance, including the former office and blacksmith shop, to be used as the new Delaware & Raritan (D & R) Canal State Park Headquarters.¹⁴ The restoration of the former office and blacksmith shop were included as a condition of sale in the agreement. A 12-acre portion of the former Princeton Nurseries seed bed area, along Lake Carnegie and the D & R Canal, was temporarily retained by Princeton University and leased for 20 years for use as Mapleton Nurseries, which was founded and initially operated by

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William Flemer IV.¹⁵ At the end of the lease, the land and former Nurseries buildings will be donated to DEP for use as open space. With the support of local advocacy groups, community organizations, the State, Townships, and private corporations, over 240 acres of land were ultimately set aside as preserved open space to be used for passive recreation and public enjoyment.¹⁶ Local groups also advocated for preserving the area as a cultural landscape; historic easements were placed on a number of the buildings.

On Arbor Day 2006, Mapleton Preserve officially opened to the public. The DEP also dedicated the new D & R Canal State Park Headquarters. The celebration included planting new trees at the park entrance, in an area designated as the Flemer Arboretum. Over 500 people attended the opening day festivities.¹⁷ Mapleton Preserve, jointly owned by the DEP and the Township of South Brunswick, encompasses about 50 acres of land that once defined the nursery core. William Flemer Sons, Inc. provided a \$300,000 endowment for the ongoing development of the site. In particular, funds are to be used to implement a preservation plan for the remaining nursery lands and associated landscape features.¹⁸

The long process to negotiate ownership and acceptable use for the lands that together defined the Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site presented many challenges. The cooperation and negotiations required to achieve the important land preservation was officially recognized in 2006 with a Historic Preservation Award from the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (HPO). The HPO presented an award for the Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site Acquisition, citing the impressive partnerships and teamwork that arose out of the process. The acquisition of the Kingston Site was award-worthy because not only did it preserve over 200 acres of historically significant land, it coordinated the rezoning of municipal lands while “preserving the sensitive historic and natural areas, concentrating the commercial development along Route 1.”¹⁹

Perhaps most challenging during the lengthy acquisition process was the upkeep of the expansive landscape and nursery support facilities that remained in place but were no longer in use. Over the years, many of the temporary style nursery structures had fallen into disrepair. By 2002, several of the greenhouses and poly houses had been removed from the formerly extensive cluster. Construction of the 220-unit Barclay Square housing development had begun by this time as well. In general, nursery drives and access routes were not regularly maintained, resulting in some alteration of the historic circulation patterns. It is also likely that some of the former nursery fields began transitioning into old field succession during this period. (See Figures III.1 and III.2.)

Over the course of the next several years, changes to the former nursery lands continued. Princeton Forrestal Center continued to develop lands surrounding the preserve. The Barclay Square subdivision was completed, and another housing subdivision was constructed between the Princeton Forrestal Campus and St. Joseph’s Seminary. The new development, called Windrows, retained small portions of some of the impressive windrows that extended across the field prior to construction. The remaining poly houses and the majority of the greenhouses were also removed prior to the acquisition by DEP.²⁰ Of the near 50 greenhouses that once stood surrounding the propagation house, only the 8 original buildings were left on site. However, these buildings have fallen into a state of disrepair along with the propagation house, packing shed and storage building. In 2005, a tall chain-link fence was installed around these buildings to provide safety and prevent further vandalism, but also prohibiting visitor access to the deteriorating historic structures. The

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former nursery production fields continued to transition into both mixed meadow species and old field succession. While many former circulation features remained in place, minor access routes were not maintained and some newer, informal alignments became apparent in the landscape. prior to the acquisition most of the cluster of buildings directly east of the Shennard House was demolished.²¹ This included the worker dormitory, pool, machinery storage building, and two sheds.²² (See Figures III.3 and III.4.) The former barn and horse stable were retained as part of the Shennard House Lot, as private property with historic preservation easements.

During this last historical period, the setting of Princeton Nurseries and the nursery landscape itself were altered. Princeton Forrestal Associates developed large residential subdivisions within the former nursery lands and had a large parcel rezoned for commercial growth. By 2003, about 500 acres of the 1,500 acres of former nursery lands remained open and undeveloped. This illustrates the rapid growth and construction occurring not only within the former nursery lands, but throughout central New Jersey during this period. Negotiating to save the historic nursery landscape was a long and arduous process, and the formation of the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands was an important element in the preservation of Mapleton Preserve and adjacent areas.

In spite of the successful preservation of an area of approximately 240 acres of land to remain as a cultural landscape, of which 186 acres were set aside as publicly accessible open space, the former nursery lands exhibited signs of decline and neglect at the end of the period. Many of the original nursery buildings and structures were demolished during the period after 1995. This includes, most notably, the extensive collection of greenhouses and poly houses as well as the cluster of buildings that defined the worker housing and equipment storage area, most of these were demolished as a condition of acquisition. A number of the buildings near the entrance and operation core remained in place, although many had fallen into disrepair. The office and blacksmith shop were repaired and restored to be used as part of the D & R Canal State Park headquarters, while a temporary chain-link fence restricts access to the deteriorating packing shed, tree storage building, and propagation house. The most prominent landscape feature – the nursery vegetation – is largely absent from the open land with some remnant nursery roads, access ways, and windrows hinting at the former character of the Kingston Site of Princeton Nurseries. Through the continued combined efforts of the Mapleton Preserve Commission, the New Jersey DEP, the Township of South Brunswick, and Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands, the former nursery landscape can be enhanced to celebrate the history of Princeton Nurseries and increase awareness of the historic landscape as a contemporary recreation, history, and nature exploration destination.

C. INTRODUCTION TO PRINCETON NURSERIES EXISTING LANDSCAPE

The existing character of the former Kingston Site of Princeton Nurseries is presented in the following narratives. A series of seven plans supports the discussion. The plans range in scale and context, illustrating first the full extent of the former nursery before focusing on the preserved lands and the core Mapleton Preserve landscape. The plans and aerials included to enhance understanding of the existing Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site landscape are as follows:

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- *Plan 6, 1972 USGS Overlay*
- *Plan 7, 1995 Aerial Photograph*
- *Plan 8, 2010 Aerial Photograph*
- *Plan 9, 2011 Former Nursery Context Plan*
- *Plan 10, 2011 Land Use Plan*
- *Plan 11, 2010 Core Area Aerial Photograph*
- *Plan 12, 2011 Core Area Plan*
- *Plan 13, Entry Landscape & Flemer Arboretum Tree Inventory Plan*

The Kingston Site today is a physical remnant of the legacy of Princeton Nurseries and its role in the growth and innovation of the nursery trade and the physical development of Princeton and central New Jersey. At its height, the Kingston Site encompassed four discrete parcels with the largest piece extending between Lake Carnegie and the Delaware & Raritan Canal at the west to US Route 1 at the east. Smaller parcels were located to the north, east, and south. *Plans 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10* depict the former nursery lands. *Plan 6* overlays the 1972 nursery plan on a more recent USGS map, illustrating the relationship of the former nursery lands with prominent landscape features, such as topography, water features, and circulation routes. It is important to note that because of the nature of this overlay, the plan does not present precise boundaries. *Plan 7* reveals changes that occurred after the end of the historic period. A large residential subdivision has been developed with the Princeton Forrestal Campus to the northeast. A clover-leaf exchange off Route 1 extends into the former nursery lands. In 1995, the field plots closest to the yard are in productive use, essentially 60% of the core area. This portion of productive fields is already reduced from the historic period in the 1980s. However, it is important to note that the field patterns south of the poly houses in the core have returned, by 1995, to a rectilinear scheme that more resembles the 1930s than the 1970s/1980s, as documented in historic aerial photographs. In *Plans 8 and 9* reveals the broad character of the former nursery lands and sets them within their physical context. *Plan 10* presents land use in the surrounding land areas. Overall the setting of the former nursery lands had been considerably developed with dense residential subdivisions and commercial and industrial enterprises interspersed with smaller swaths of green space.

The character of the four former nursery parcels varies greatly. The northernmost parcel, in Franklin Township, includes the former irrigation pond, known as Wynkoop Pond. The pond remains in the landscape today and is still surrounded by woodland. Southwest of the pond, a large building and parking area have been constructed as part of Trap Rock Industries, a quarry operation. The quarry itself is located to the north, just outside the boundary of the former nursery lands. Additional retention ponds have been constructed north and south of the quarry building. This land was part of a settlement to buy out the share of Stevenson Flemer, brother of William III and John Flemer.

The eastern parcel, in the Monmouth Junction area, fronts on the Amtrak railroad corridor. Some agricultural fields are present in this area, although they do not appear to correspond with the original nursery organization. Much of the area has been developed for residential use. The northernmost piece of this parcel extends north of Ridge Road. Here additional residential streets have been laid out on lands identified as “Prairie” A, B, and C on the 1972 nursery plan. Just west of this, abutting the former nursery lands, is South Brunswick High School.

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The southernmost parcel, while never owned by Princeton Nurseries, was leased from the University; it still retains an agricultural quality with open fields and extant windrows. Some of the former production fields are now used as sports fields. Washington Road bisects the parcel, providing access across the canal and Lake Carnegie and into the Princeton University campus. Princeton elm trees planted by William Flemer Jr. in the 1920s continue to line Washington Street today.

Of the four components, the central parcel, which was the focus of operations, conveys the strongest sense of the historic use and character. The linear spatial patterns with extant windrows and nursery drives and access routes are evident throughout much of the central parcel. The southern area of this parcel has little trace of the former nursery production. Here, residential subdivisions and Princeton Forrestal Village define a new landscape character. While the southern portion of this large central parcel has shifted to residential use and development, the open, agricultural character remains evident to the north. Here the divisions of various fields are readily visible although they are no longer in active production. Some of the most prominent and visually striking remnant landscape features are the windrows. Extant lines of evergreen trees create dramatic vertical forms in the primarily open landscape. (See Figure III.5.) Mapleton Preserve forms the core of the preserved lands with additional preserved open space to the north, east, south, and west. Smaller parcels of lands owned by William Flemer's Sons Inc. and Princeton University are also adjacent to Mapleton Preserve with a large parcel owned by Princeton University to the east. This parcel fronts on US Route 1 and has been zoned for office/research/conference development. These various landscape features, patterns, and uses are illustrated on *Plans 9 and 10*.

The majority of the 1,500 acres that comprised the Kingston Site of Princeton Nurseries has been developed to accommodate new uses. Primarily, this includes residential development and commercial and institutional growth. Ownership and protection of adjacent parcels are indicated on *Plans 10 and 11*. The character of the surrounding context of the former nursery lands has also shifted considerably in recent decades. The patterns, character, and density of the new development alter the historic rural character of the nursery lands, which were defined by expansive open fields, clusters of support buildings and worker housing, and linear spatial patterns defined by windrows, production fields, and access drives. Despite the growth and development occurring throughout central New Jersey, the over 200 acres that have been set aside as preserved open space continue to convey the former agricultural quality of the historic cultural landscape. In particular, Mapleton Preserve maintains the former spatial patterns, circulation features, and a number of landscape structures. Together, these features express the historic landscape character while providing valuable space for public recreation and interpretation.

D. EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER & PLAN, PRESERVED LANDS, 2011

The following narrative describes the overall character of the preserved lands within the former Kingston Site of Princeton Nurseries. This includes Mapleton Preserve as well as several nearby parcels that have been set aside as preserved open space. The boundaries of Mapleton Preserve and the preserved lands can be seen on *Plans 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 11*, outlined in orange. The landscape character can be better understood through an exploration of elements known as character-defining

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features. To the extent possible, these features can be compared over the historical period of the landscape in order to track the level of change that has occurred and to serve as a framework for future landscape preservation treatment efforts. Character-defining features are identified and described as a series of interrelated elements that together define the overall landscape character of the Kingston Site preserved lands. The features include:

- *Spatial Organization, Land Patterns & Land Use*
- *Visual Relationships & Qualities*
- *Topography & Natural Systems*
- *Vegetation*
- *Circulation*
- *Hydrology & Water Features*
- *Structures, Site Furnishings & Objects*

The accumulated results of the continued evolution of the Kingston Site landscape from its origins to today are summarized in this section. The existing landscape character discussion is framed by an overview of the character-defining features and their relationships to each other. Documentation of the landscape features allows for an understanding not only of the elements present in the landscape, but also of the character of individual features. Further, it aids in identifying issues that currently impact use, functionality, management, and interpretation.

D1. Spatial Organization, Land Patterns & Land Use

Spatial organization and land patterns at the preserved lands of the Kingston Site are important factors in use and understanding of the historic landscape. Patterns of linearity are evident throughout the landscape. These patterns are defined primarily by the spatial relationship among specific features, such as the former production fields, access drives, and remnant plantings. Clusters of extant buildings at the entry to Mapleton Preserve also contribute to spatial organization. The organization of the buildings in relation to each other and nearby circulation features further contributes to the linear spatial quality. (See Figure III.6.) Spatially the preserved lands are generally open. Some areas have vegetation clustered along the perimeter, reinforcing the organization of former fields and use areas. (See Figure III.7.) Land use of the preserved lands focuses on passive recreation for public enjoyment. Additional opportunities exist for interpretive and educational use. The broad landscape patterns and spatial organization help inform and enhance the opportunities for public use and understanding.

D2. Visual Relationships

Visual relationships within the preserved lands are determined by several factors and individual landscape features. Site vegetation, topography, buildings and structures, and the layout and alignment of circulation features all define views and vistas both within the landscape and from adjacent lands. Linear spatial patterns frame views throughout the landscape. Views along many of the drives and former access ways are partially enclosed by vegetation growth along one or both sides. (See Figures III.8 and III.9.) Management of landscape features, particularly vegetation, impacts views. The continued growth of planted and volunteer vegetation obscures views of landscape buildings and structures. (See Figure III.10.) In other areas, the management of former fields or

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structure sites as mown turf creates more open vistas, providing visual connections to landscape features. (See Figure III.11.) Some former production fields appear to be mown more regularly than others, which also creates more open visual relationships. (See Figure III.12.) Overall, site vegetation and its spatial relationship to other landscape features define the visual relationships and available views within the preserved lands.

D3. Topography & Natural Systems

The topography and natural systems of Princeton Nurseries are important features that help define the broad landscape character. The ground plane is relatively level overall with changes in grade evident in specific areas. Subtle changes in grade indicate a more natural elevational shift. A number of large earth mounds or berms are evident in the landscape, which indicate a human intervention. One such mound can be found in the southeast quadrant of Mapleton Preserve. Here a mound of soil covered in low vegetation is located along the north edge of a former nursery drive. (See Figure III.13.) A tall earthen berm has been laid out along nearly the entire southern boundary of Mapleton Preserve. The berm was built after the 1986 sale of land to Princeton University to block vehicular access to the land Princeton Nurseries retained; it was in part planted with trees to provide a further screen, and the trees were also used for cuttings and seeds. The mound has been planted with white pine and spruce trees along the top and witchhazel on the northern slope. The topography of the Kingston Site preserved lands contributes to the overall landscape character. Because the topography was an important factor in the historic use of nursery production, the topography today enhances visitor understanding of historic use.

D4. Vegetation

Vegetation continues to be a prominent feature in the Kingston Site preserved lands and is important in defining the overall landscape character. Today site vegetation is comprised of a mix of turf, meadow species, planted trees and shrubs, and volunteer growth with some invasive species present. Together the vegetation helps define spatial patterns and visual relationships.

While historically the most prolific vegetation at the site was nursery stock, today stock is limited. Some remnant stock can be found within the preserved lands. Only a few stock blocks remain with some linear rows evident. (See Figure III.14.) With a few notable exceptions, the remnant nursery stock is not readily evident to the general user. Two prominent exceptions can be found in the state-owned land located between Mapleton Road and the Delaware & Raritan Canal. Here, two distinct rows of nursery tree stock grow as prominent visual features in the landscape. To the north, just south of a large stockpiling area, is a row of Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*). (See Figure III.15.) Farther south, northwest of the former home of William Flemers I-III, is a row of October Glory red maple (*Acer rubrum* 'October Glory'). There also appears to be a considerable amount of arborvitae stock growing south of the Flemer Arboretum, east of Mapleton Road. Site users with a trained eye will likely note the limited amount of remnant nursery stock while in general it is not a prominent landscape feature.

Planted vegetation is also found in the preserved lands at the former Kingston Site. The entry from Mapleton Road is one of the most planted areas within the landscape today. Here a variety of deciduous, evergreen, and ornamental trees grow over mown turf. Large shade and ornamental trees

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are positioned between the office building and Mapleton Road. A massing of American holly (*Ilex opaca*) underplanted with daffodils grows along the north side of the office. A prolific bamboo planting surrounds the former blacksmith shop to the north and east. A number of planted trees also grow in turf islands east of the office, where mature deciduous and one evergreen tree provide shade over the looped drive and parking area. (See Figure III.16.) One of the more prominent plantings that extends beyond the entry landscape is a row of Princeton Sentry ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba* 'Princeton Sentry') that continue to line the south side of the drive. (See Figures III.8 and III.17.) The line of Sentry ginkgo trees to the east is encroached upon by invasive vines and succession tree growth including honeysuckle (*Lonicera* species), Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), and pin oak (*Quercus palustris*). To the north, opposite the line of Sentry ginkgo at the west, is a mature columnar sugar maple (*Acer saccharum* 'columnare'). A large specimen tree can also be found at the site of the former worker dormitory, pool, and support facility area. Here a large red oak (*Quercus rubra*) spreads over the turf ground plane. (See Figures III.7 and III.18.) During the historic period, added plantings in the entry area enabled Princeton Nurseries to display the quality of their stock and illustrate landscape uses. Today, they provide a scenic entry experience for site visitors and allows users to better understand the historic use and character of the grounds. (See Figure III.19.)

The Flemer Arboretum is located south of the main entry. Vegetation here includes a mix of deciduous, evergreen, and ornamental trees of varying maturity. Plantings are concentrated along the perimeter of the arboretum with younger plants scattered throughout. A row of crabapple (*Malus* species) extends north-south to the west of a constructed pond. Dense vegetation surrounds the pond. Southeast of the pond are a few rows of a flowering dogwood hybrid (*Cornus* species). A grouping of witchhazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) grows northeast of the pond. The ground plane in the northernmost section is managed as mown turf while much of the arboretum is treated with taller, mixed species meadow.

Formal plantings that remain in the landscape surrounding the Kingston Site preserved lands are also valuable remnant features. The rows of sycamore trees (*Platanus occidentalis*) William Flemer Jr. planted in the early 1930s continue to line Mapleton Road today. An impressive allée of oak trees (*Quercus* species) is located across Mapleton Road from the former office and entry to Mapleton Preserve. Also planted by William Flemer Jr., today these trees form a dramatic landscape feature that line a drive that now functions as the entry drive to Mapleton Nurseries. (See Figure III.20.) The road is on the former roadbed of the Camden & Amboy Railway. These types of remnant plantings provide contextual continuity for the historic landscape, enhancing its setting and providing additional interpretive opportunities.

The former production fields display a range of plant materials today with little evidence remaining of the extensive nursery stock plantings. The ground plane that surrounds the former operation core is turf growing over a gravel base. Presence of volunteer vegetation is limited and concentrated close to the extant buildings while overall the ground plane is open. Turf outside the chain link fence that surrounds the former operation buildings is mown while turf inside the enclosure is taller, reaching up to one foot in some areas. (See Figures III.11 and III.21.) Much of the lands south of the former operation core are transitioning into old field succession. A considerable amount of volunteer vegetation is evident throughout these fields. Prominent species include black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), bayberry (*Myrica* species), and Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*). The condition of

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the ground plane varies throughout with some area densely covered in vegetation and other sparser areas. (See Figures III.22 and III.23.) In the area directly south of the propagation house and Sentry ginkgo planting, the ground plane is covered in dense vine cover that includes wisteria, and tall native grass species. The presence and types of volunteer vegetation indicate changes in natural conditions and likely poorer soils; it also reveals the loss of managed care undertaken in the former fields. For example, a field with woody vegetation present has likely not been mown as recently as fields covered with mixed meadow species. The perimeter of these once growing fields to the east is less managed and has a mix of re-seeded ornamentals such as dogwood (*Cornus species*), cherry (*Prunus species*), and mock orange (*Philadelphus coronarius*). Invasive vines in these margins include multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), honeysuckle (*Lonicera species*), smilax (*Smilax rodundifolia*), and grape ivy (*vitis species*). Opposite the drive path along the drainage stream, similar invasive species are growing. Within the overgrowth, set back away from the drive edge, are larger ornamental and native tree species that include spruce (*Abies species*), sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), and pin oak (*quercus palustris*).

North of the operation core, the former wholesale distribution yard displays a different type of vegetative cover. For the most part the ground plane is surfaced with tall meadow grass. Wetland species are evident through the center of the space, indicating the ground is wetter here than in the surrounding landscape. (See Figure III.24.) This condition results from the proximity of the former distribution yard to the Heathcote Brook and the secondary brook.

In addition to the former production fields, a number of wooded areas are also found in the preserved lands. North of Mapleton Preserve, a densely wooded area surrounds Heathcote Brook. A variety of invasive species are present in this area, including callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), bamboo, multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), and honeysuckle (*Lonicera species*). The woodlands extend south, surrounding the secondary brook and spreading to the southeast and encompassing the eastern edge of Mapleton Preserve. This woodland is comprised of several different species with oak and maple (*Acer species*) being the dominant types. Other species observed in this area include ash (*Fraxinus species*), poplar (*Populus species*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), river birch (*Betula nigra*), rhododendron (*Rhododendron species*), bamboo, knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), and ferns. Formal walking trails are not readily evident through these wooded areas although they are accessible to visitors. The woodlands provide pleasant dappled sunlight over the ground plane, creating a landscape character that is distinctly different from the production fields. (See Figure III.25.)

Vegetation at the Kingston Site preserved lands is an important landscape feature. The remnant nursery stock, ornamental plantings, arboretum, former production fields, and woodlands all contribute to the overall landscape character. While extant nursery stock is limited, the continued presence of the production fields provides some understanding of the historic use and organization of the nursery landscape. While regular care of the fields and other vegetation appears limited currently, strong opportunities exist to enhance management efforts in a way that will afford valuable interpretive features.

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D5. Circulation

Circulation at the Kingston Site preserved lands consists primarily of former nursery roads. Much like the historic period, today roads vary from asphalt to dirt, gravel, and mown turf. In general the roads are laid out in straight alignments, reinforcing the linear spatial pattern evident throughout the cultural landscape.

Asphalt roads and drives are concentrated near the site entry and former operation core. Site users enter Mapleton Preserve along an asphalt drive from Mapleton Road. The drive continues east, past the office building. To the north, the drive loops around with a parking area at the northern edge. Remnant granite curbing lines the edges of two turf islands. (See Figure III.8.) The drive continues north of the parking lot, looping around to provide an exit onto Mapleton Road. The asphalt transitions to gravel before the drive meets the public street. A wide expanse of asphalt extends through the former operation core between the packing shed and tree storage building. The asphalt is enclosed within the chain link fence and is not accessible to visitor vehicles. Here the pavement is cracked and broken with weeds growing throughout. A secondary drive extends south, passing in front of the propagation house. Remnant curbing lines this drive. At the northeast corner of the large asphalt expanse, an asphalt drive extends east, forming Railroad Avenue and providing a connection to Greenwood Avenue and Ridge Road. Formal paved driving surfaces are limited throughout the rest of the preserved lands.

Gravel roads are also found within the preserved lands, primarily within Mapleton Preserve. From the entry drive, a gravel road extends south, alongside the Flemer Arboretum. At its southern terminus, this road connects perpendicularly with a compacted dirt road, which extends east parallel with the southern edge of Mapleton Preserve. (See Figure III.18.) At its eastern end, the road turns north, connecting with a subtly curving gravel road. This gravel road extends roughly northwest and is one of the only non-rectilinear road alignments in the former nursery landscape. The amount of gravel varies along the road with a mix of gravel, compacted dirt, and turf towards the south. (See Figure III.26.) As the road approaches the site of the former greenhouse cluster and propagation house, it intersects with an east-west gravel road. (See Figure III.11.) The segment to the west is lined along its southern edge with Princeton Sentry ginkgo. (See Figure III.27.) It extends west until it connects with the paved entry drive. It also continues east, connecting with a concrete bridge that allows access over the brook. This shorter road segment continues east a short distance before intersecting with the paved Greenwood Avenue. At the north, the curving gravel road intersects with the southeast corner of the large asphalt expanse that runs through the former operation core. Another two gravel roads are located near the northern edge of Mapleton Preserve. One road roughly parallels the former alignment of the Rocky Hill Branch railroad corridor. A short drive segment spurs to the north, toward the former wholesale distribution yard and wooded area. An asphalt section with remnant railroad tracks remains in the landscape today. (See Figure III.28.) This spur drive is a portion of the driveway that provided access to the residence formerly located in this area. The gravel roads that are present in the landscape today are continuations of historic features. They comprise former nursery access ways that provided main routes through the nursery grounds.

A number of roads are present in the current landscape that are more informal in nature, treated with turf or compacted dirt. A compacted dirt road extends south from the propagation house area,

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continuing through the former greenhouse and poly house cluster site, production fields, and into the former worker dormitory area. It intersects with a number of turf roads and the southernmost dirt road. A number of turf roads extend east-west through this southern portion of Mapleton Preserve. The level of management for these roads varies. The height of the turf indicates that some have been mown more recently while others are more overgrown. (See Figures III.13 and III.29.) The former production fields outside Mapleton Preserve have a combination of compacted dirt and turf roads that remain from the historic period.

Circulation is an important feature in the preserved lands. Former nursery roads provide vehicular and pedestrian access through the open space. No formal pedestrian-only paths have been established. Pedestrians likely utilize nursery roads as well as traversing the open ground plane. While visitor vehicular access is not permitted through any of the former production fields, no signs are present that tell visitors where they can and cannot drive. Because site use focuses on passive public recreation, circulation features are integral for site use and functionality. In general the circulation features contribute to the character of the Kingston Site landscape, forming a network of primarily linear features that enhance the spatial linearity evident throughout the landscape.

D6. Hydrology & Water Features

Several water features are located within the preserved lands of the Kingston Site landscape, including both natural landscape features and constructed features. Natural water features include Heathcote Brook and two unnamed secondary brooks. Lake Carnegie and the Delaware and Raritan Canal are located in close proximity to the site and although they are not within the site boundaries, they contribute to the setting and sense of place. Constructed water features include remnant pieces of the once extensive irrigation system and the Flemer Arboretum pond. Together, these features enhance the preserved lands and contribute to the landscape character.

Three brooks extend through the existing landscape. Heathcote Brook runs east-west north of Mapleton Preserve, connecting with the Delaware and Raritan Canal at the west. To the south, a secondary brook winds north-south through the existing woodland. Just north of Railroad Avenue, the brook connects with another unnamed secondary brook that extends east-west, running parallel with Railroad Avenue. (See Figure III.30.) The north-south brook continues north and divides the former wholesale distribution yard into two distinct spaces. Near the center the brook widens, forming a pond surrounded by dense volunteer growth. (See Figure III.31.) North of the pond, the secondary brook connects with Heathcote Brook. These natural water features are important to understanding the historic landscape character and use. They contribute to the natural hydrology of the site, which influenced William Flemer Sr.'s decision to locate the Princeton Nurseries operations on this site.

Constructed water features include irrigation remnants and a manmade pond. During the historic period, an extensive irrigation system with an impressive water tower provided water for the nursery lands and the Village of Kingston. While this system is no longer in place, pieces of the system are still evident in the landscape. This includes primarily faucets, spigots, and pipes observed throughout the grounds. (See Figure III.32) A constructed pond, originally built to control drainage, is located near the site entry, in the Flemer Arboretum. The feature is roughly rectangular

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in shape. It is surrounded by dense volunteer vegetation, obscuring views of it from within the arboretum. (See Figure III.33.)

The water features are important elements in the existing landscape. Natural water features like brooks add to the enhanced rural quality of the landscape. Constructed water features enhance site interpretation and understanding of the historic landscape. The character of the individual water features and site hydrology contribute to the overall landscape character of the Kingston Site preserved lands.

D7. Structures, Site Furnishings & Objects

Numerous structures, site furnishings, and objects are present in the Kingston Site preserved lands. Structures include former administrative and support buildings, the propagation house, and smaller structures, like fences. Site furnishings and objects primarily include signs and small wooden stakes that were once used to label plant rows in the production fields. The structures, site furnishings, and objects at the Kingston Site are important landscape features that provide interpretive opportunities.

Extant structures continue to reflect historically-clustered spatial arrangements. The majority of the structures are located within Mapleton Preserve. The former Princeton Nurseries administrative office and blacksmith shop now serve as headquarters for the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park and an educational building respectively. (See Figure III.34.) These buildings were required to be rehabilitated and restored prior to their acquisition. East of the office is the former operation core. Extant buildings include the packing shed, tree storage building, propagation house, and eight greenhouses. A temporary chain link fence, installed for safety and security, restricts public access to this building cluster, which has become dilapidated over time. (See Figures III.35 and III.36.) Volunteer vegetation is rampant on and around these structures.

A number of the former employee residences remain in the landscape surrounding Mapleton Preserve. The stone Mathias Van Dyke House that was the home of William Flemer Jr. and later William Flemer III, and also served as the gathering place for several generations of Flemers, and associated outbuildings and site furnishings remain and are privately owned. There are no preservation restrictions on this significant building or its gardens and outbuildings. The William Van Dyke House and outbuildings, a farm cluster that once served as William Flemer, III's home, have been demolished; the site is owned by Princeton University and is zoned for intense development. A cluster of worker houses remain on Mapleton Road, directly west of the entry to Mapleton Preserve. Although privately owned, a preservation easement has been placed on the house façades. The easement will help maintain the character of the houses when viewed from the street, which impacts the overall setting and sense of place for the historic landscape. An additional cluster of former worker housing is located on Greenwood Avenue, Railroad Avenue, and Ridge Road. Many of the houses still reflect the historic Princeton Nurseries color scheme of yellow with white trim. Since 1995, the remaining houses have been vacant and substantially deteriorated. (See Figure III.37.) Currently construction is progressing to restore and rehabilitate the existing houses and build six new houses on Greenwood Avenue. Control measures have been put in place to ensure the new development is compatible with the historic density. The former nursery residence known as the Shennard House also remains in the landscape today, in land owned by a private developer.

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The preservation and rehabilitation of the vacant Shennard House and its outbuildings (including the former barn and stable) are in the planning and permit stage.

In addition to the buildings, a number of small-scale structures and site furnishings are also evident in the preserved lands. Some remnant post and rail fencing is located along the west edge of the Flemer Arboretum. This consists primarily of wooden posts. Several rails remain at the southern edge of the arboretum, where vegetation obscures much of the historic landscape feature. (See Figures III.38 and III.39.) Additional post and rail fencing is located at a stone culvert along Railroad Avenue. (See Figure III.40.) It can also be found in front of the former home of William Flemer III, outside the preserved lands. Additional fencing in the preserved lands includes a wood post and wire fence located south of the propagation house. Prolific wisteria plants cover the fence, making it difficult to see in the landscape. A chain link fence has been erected around much of the former operation core as a security and safety precaution so visitors cannot enter the deteriorated buildings.

Other small-scale features used at the preserved lands include primarily signs. Two wooden signs are located at the Mapleton Preserve entrance. A large brown sign notes the site as the headquarters for the Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park. On the other side of the entry drive a tall white sign lets visitors know they have arrived at Mapleton Preserve. (See Figure III.41.) A wooden display case containing visitor information is located outside the office building. Signage throughout the interior of Mapleton Preserve or the preserved lands is limited. As a result, visitor wayfinding is a challenge.

Landscape objects are nearly entirely comprised of remnant historic features. Small wooden stakes that once identified plant types in the production fields are evident intermittently throughout the site. Several are used at the base of trees planted around the office building. Metal wire-frame mower guards also remain in the landscape. A larger extant object is a large piece of mechanical equipment that was used to pick rocks from the soil. (See Figure III.42.) This object sits among dense vegetation and is only readily evident during the cold season, before the trees and other plants produce their leaves. These types of remnant historic period features offer valuable opportunities for interpretation and enhancing user experiences.

Structures, site furnishings, and objects play a strong role in defining the overall character of the landscape. Each feature enhances understanding of the historic function and character of the Kingston Site. Today many of the structures have fallen into disrepair. However, each of the features provides important opportunities to improve site character and visitor interpretation.

E. TREE INVENTORY & CONDITION ASSESSMENT

In total, 97 trees were observed, assessed, and documented in the preserved lands. Efforts focused on the entry landscape and Flemer Arboretum; a few specimen trees were also inventoried and assessed. Of the trees inventoried 1 was standing dead. The variety of tree types represented within the landscape includes 22 genera and 33 species. Many of the trees are mature and some exhibit natural decline. The largest tree is a 14-stem saucer magnolia (*Magnolia x soulangiana*) that measures 98 inches in diameter. The most abundant tree genus inventoried is the oak, which includes white (*Quercus alba*), pin (*Quercus palustris*), willow (*Quercus phellos*), and red (*Quercus rubra*). In total, 16

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oak trees were inventoried at the preserve entrance and Flemer Arboretum, comprising about 19% of the trees inventoried.

Heritage Landscapes identified the landscape trees by genus and species from field observation and keyed tree species to botanical sources as required. Trees were assessed and mapped using previous maps and a recent aerial photograph for field mapping work. Trees were assessed for canopy, trunk, and root condition with the tree condition codes recorded as shown on *Plan 13, Entry & Flemer Arboretum Tree Inventory Plan*. This mapping with tree condition layer is a valuable product of this report. It serves to document the existing trees within the landscape, as no previous tree inventory existed. The results of this assessment are summarized here with detailed findings and a complete list of tree species inventories included in Appendix A.

The canopy, trunk, and root codes are as follows:

Canopy	A	Good: full crown, vigorous growth, no immediate care required
	B	Fair: minor problems, minimal deadwood with a diameter of less than 3 inches, minor pruning recommended
	C	Poor: major problems, deadwood of over 3 inches and up to 6 branches, major pruning recommended, monitor for hazard, possible removal
	D	Failing: major dieback in crown, near dead, standing dead, hazard to be removed
	E	Dead: stump, fallen tree, or depression (tree identified if possible)
Trunks	1	No visible damage
	2	Damage including wounds, fungus, cracks, or decay
Roots	U	Unrestricted: open
	R	Restricted: Enclosed within 8-10 feet on one side by roads, sidewalks, buildings, fences, or other substantial objects

When fully inventoried and assessed, a coded tree may have a code that consists of 6-9 characters. The first 2 or 3 letters designate the genus and species. The plant list provided in this appendix keys the genus and species by code. The next 1 to 3 numbers refer to the diameter of the tree at breast height (DBH) in inches. For trees with multiple stems, the diameter of individual trunks was recorded at dbh and added together to find the total diameter. The following letter (A-E) shows the condition of the canopy. The next number (1 or 2) refers to the condition of the trunk. The next letter (U or R) designates the condition of the roots. If there is a T following the root code, it means the tree has two stems, if there is an M as following the root code it means the tree has three or more stems. For the example of Ap45B1UM, Ap is the species of the tree, Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*), and 45 is the diameter at breast height in inches. The B code denotes a tree canopy that is in fair condition and may require minimal pruning, 1 signifies a trunk in good condition, and U indicates an unrestricted root zone. The M indicates it is a multi-stemmed tree. Shrubs were also identified by genus and species with no assigned codes.

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The following charts summarize the results of the assessment of tree canopy, trunk, and root conditions as well as by DBH.

Canopy Health						
	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Number of Trees	9	30	52	5	1	97
% of Trees	9%	31%	54%	5%	1%	100%

Trunk Condition			
	1	2	Total
Number of Trees	87	10	97
% of Trees	90%	10%	100%

Root Space			
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Number of Trees	14	83	97
% of Trees	14%	86%	100%

Tree Counts by Diameter Breast Height (DBH)							
	Under 4"	4"-8"	9"-16"	17"-24"	25"-31"	32" and Up	Total
Number of Trees	13	5	31	31	4	13	97
% of Trees	13%	5%	32%	32%	4%	13%	100%

F. CURRENT LANDSCAPE USE & MAINTENANCE

Landscape use and maintenance are important factors in understanding the functionality, user experiences, and character of the existing landscape. Because the preserved lands have varied stewards, there will be variations in both current use and level of maintenance. Limited use and maintenance operations were observed during fieldwork sessions.

The preserved lands are available to the public for passive recreation. This includes activities like strolling, walking, dog walking, picnicking, enjoying scenic views, and other related activities. A few more active uses are also permitted, such as jogging and bike riding. The Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands also hold a number of special events at the preserved lands. These include naturalist photography workshops, bird watching outings, Arbor Day celebrations, music events, and group nature walks. Educational sessions are also held at the site in the former blacksmith shop. A recent topic addressed little-known native plants. By providing a range of activities and events, a wider range of user groups can be drawn into the former Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site landscape. The D&R Canal State Park historian and naturalist also conduct walks and events on the property as does the Kingston Greenways Association.

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Use is directly related to site maintenance. The way in which specific areas are maintained allows for various uses. For example, a production field meant to attract wildlife might be maintained in a mixed meadow species while space designated for picnicking requires a different approach. A landscape that appears well cared for attracts more users and enhances user experiences. Currently, differing levels of maintenance are evident throughout the landscape. The entry area appears to be the best cared for area in the preserved lands. This is appropriate, today as it was in the time of operation, since it is visible to passers-by and is the first space visitors see when they enter the site. Determining programmatic goals and user needs will help further guide maintenance efforts in the future.

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CHAPTER III ENDNOTES

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- ¹⁰ Karen Linder to William Flemer IV, May 2006, Private Collection of William Flemer IV.
- ¹¹ Jill P. Capuzzo, "How their Garden Grows," *The New York Times*, 7 January 2001.
- ¹² Karen Linder to William Flemer IV, May 2006, Private Collection of William Flemer IV.
- ¹³ Charles W. Kim, "Princeton Nurseries Tract May Come to Township," *The Sentinel*, 16 January 2003, available online at Greater Media Newspapers, "Princeton Nurseries Tract May Come to Township," http://nbs.gmnews.com/News/2003/0116/Front_page/028.html.
- ¹⁴ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, "Green Acres Success Stories, Delaware and Raritan Canal Preservation Advances" <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/feature.htm>.
- ¹⁵ At the end of the lease, the land and former Nurseries buildings will be donated to DEP for use as open space.
- ¹⁶ Karen Linder to William Flemer IV, May 2006, Private Collection of William Flemer IV.
- ¹⁷ Karen Linder to William Flemer IV, May 2006, Private Collection of William Flemer IV.
- ¹⁸ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, "Green Acres Success Stories, Delaware and Raritan Canal Preservation Advances" <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/feature.htm>.
- ¹⁹ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Historic Preservation Office, "Historic Preservation Awards Ceremony," <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/4sustain/awds2006.htm>.
- ²⁰ The demolition was required by DEP as a condition of acquisition.
- ²¹ The demolition was required by DEP as a condition of acquisition.
- ²² Image files PRN-NJGIN-G10B7-2002Aerial.tif and PRN-NJGIN-2007Aerial.jpg.

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